

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



From the beginning of my term as mayor, we have consistently worked toward making the very core of what we do at the City of Memphis stronger. Today, I am presenting a proposed FY 2018 general fund budget of \$668.7 million and a general obligation bond-funded capital improvement plan budget of \$77.8 million, both of which will make another tangible step toward a stronger Memphis. That means allocating necessary and more resources to public safety, increasing what we do for our young people, and calling for no increase in our tax rate while fully allowing us to meet our operating and debt obligations.

More opportunities for our young people will make us a stronger Memphis, and they are embedded throughout this budget. We're allocating \$475,000 more to open our Libraries longer hours. We're spending \$663,000 more on our youth jobs programs -- amplifying a program that already provides 1,400 meaningful opportunities for Memphis young people every year. And our young people will benefit from a renewed emphasis on funding our Parks Division, particularly with upgrades to parks and community centers.

A stronger Memphis means stronger, safer neighborhoods, which is why we continue emphasis on public safety -- our Police and Fire Divisions in particular. We are increasing funding to our Police division by \$5.8 million, mostly to accommodate our staff's rebuilding. As our complement has fallen below 2,000 officers, pay increases and large recruiting classes are part of our multi-year, wide-ranging strategy to rebuild the department from its recent staffing peak. We are budgeting to increase staffing by more than 50 officers and 70 Police Service Technicians, which will allow commissioned officers to focus on our priority, which is reducing violent crime. Overtime costs will be increased to fund staffing in high crime areas determined by data.

Plus, considering all sources, we will be funding approximately 88 percent of our annual required contribution to our pension fund, continuing the positive trajectory we started years ago. It's also five percentage points higher than the 83 percent required for FY 2018 by state law.

In our capital improvement plan, we will continue to reinvest in infrastructure through an \$18.5 million spend on street paving -- a \$2 million increase from FY 2017. We will sustain last year's increased support for a more robust public transit system -- including the expectation of the return of steel-wheel trolleys on Main Street in FY 2018. And as Memphis approaches the important 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s death in our city, we're appropriating \$1 million toward features that will commemorate what that means to all of us.

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This proposed budget helps make us a stronger Memphis by being fiscally responsible. Keeping our tax rate level encourages growth and stability for those who want to invest in our community. We remain committed to a city government that prioritizes clean, safe neighborhoods. Through the actions for which this budget serves as a blueprint, we will take another major step toward a stronger Memphis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Strickland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Strickland" clearly legible.

Mayor Jim Strickland